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with little regard to the pay they were to receive. It is not to mere increase of wages that we must look for the future renaissance of good workmanship.

ALVIN S. JOHNSON

CHICAGO, ILL.

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*Modern Accounting.* By HENRY RAND HATFIELD. New York: Appleton & Co., 1909. 8vo, pp. xiv+367. \$1.75.

Two main motives may influence the writer of a book on modern accounts—the desire to show the problems of the accountant, and the desire to contribute to the solution of those problems. Professor Hatfield, in his preface, says that “the comparative study of accounting practice will, perhaps, be a greater service to accounting science than a more dogmatic treatise.” On this principle Mr. Hatfield has gathered and presented a vast amount of information concerning accounting practice, legal decisions, and expert opinion. The result is an extremely valuable and interesting treatise, and yet not quite what one is led to expect from the words of the preface. The book is, after all, a good deal dogmatic; though the dogma is not necessarily Mr. Hatfield’s own. Indeed, the chief unfavorable comment to be made on the book is the fact that the author has given so much opinion of other people and so little of his own—especially when the opinions of others are so often contradictory one of another. He has raised many problems; and most of them are still problems when he leaves them. Much may be said of the value of this sort of accomplishment. Indeed, all students of accounting must be grateful to Mr. Hatfield for bringing together this information in orderly form. It is probable, however, that the thing needed in the literature of accounting just now is more boldness to argue distinctly for this or that principle. Mr. Hatfield’s own opinion is usually implied in his comments on the other opinions expressed, and his opinion seems always sane, but except for the close reader it is likely to be more or less swamped in the mass of confirmatory and contradictory opinion.

Indeed, a general comment to be made on the whole book is that it is academic. It begins with elaborate equations to explain the theory of double-entry, and these are followed by minus and plus statements and classifications that savor of the old-fashioned schoolroom. As soon as accounting problems are raised, legal decisions (seventy distinct cases are cited in the course of the book) and accountants’ opinions present almost all imaginable solutions. This is interesting to the reader and helpful to the lawyer preparing a brief, but is hardly convincing to the layman who needs sound principles. What the progress of accounting requires is a threshing-out of the truth of business transactions; and emphasis on the mere balancing of contrary opinions, judicial or otherwise, tends to obscure truth. As a matter of fact, the courts cannot be expected to give sound decisions on accounting questions until the new facts of modern business have been recognized by accountants themselves. The accountants should expect to lead, not follow the courts—that is, they should determine the truth independently of law; and then the judges may wisely determine the law out of the truth. Mr. Hatfield’s own point of view is uncomplaisingly favorable to making accounts show the exact truth, but he is not eager to argue for his own beliefs as to just what is the truth. Often when

he does not obscure truth by giving contradicting opinions he gives as the sole word on a problem the simple dogmatic statement of some other writer. This is hardly conducive to the progress of accounting, for the science is so young that no man can yet have earned the right to be quoted as a final authority. When, on the other hand, Mr. Hatfield puts his modesty aside and comes out squarely to state and defend his own opinion, he is so sane that we doubly regret his reticence in other matters. Just such clear thinking is needed to solve some of the accounting problems that perplex the business world.

In a book arranged on the plan of monograph chapters, instead of that of progressive complexity, much repetition and possible vagueness of definition is unavoidable. Professor Hatfield has apparently attempted to make each chapter reasonably clear to a reader who is interested chiefly in the subject of that chapter, and consequently he has repeated many points several times. For example, in the chapter on capital stock he points out that national bank stock is often originally subscribed at a premium so that a surplus may be provided at the start (p. 155); in the chapter on profits, he wishes to show that profit and loss account may contain credit items not really profit, and again tells us that national bank stock is often subscribed at a premium (p. 222); finally, in the chapter on surplus, he finds it necessary to tell us this again (p. 234). Occasionally the reverse is true, for he wishes to use a term before he has defined it. Thus on p. 267 in the chapter on sinking funds, he tells us that in a certain case a sinking fund is taken out of net income and not out of earnings, but not until the next chapter (p. 282) does he define income and earnings. Occasional apparent contradictions result also from this sort of arrangement. For example, on pp. 141 and 241 we are told that reserves may be provided for contingencies, such as unexpected obsolescence of machinery, but on p. 290 the possibility of this sort of thing is wholly neglected in the criticism of certain corporations.

On the whole, the book is heartily to be commended for the sanity of the author's individual judgments, for its gathering of information about the practice, or lack of uniformity in practice, of modern accounts, and for its encyclopaedic character.

WILLIAM MORSE COLE

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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*Philanthropy and the State, or Social Politics.* By B. KIRKMAN GRAY; edited by ELEANOR KIRKMAN GRAY AND B. L. HUTCHINS. London: P. S. King and Son, 1908. 8vo, pp. x+339. 7s. 6d.

The author undertakes in this essay, which was left unfinished at the time of his sudden death, to analyze certain changes in the attitude of mind of the English public, in accordance with which, for the *laissez-faire* doctrine of the early nineteenth century, is substituted a sense of the widest responsibility for social well-being as a principle of governmental organization. It is, of course, true that the English government, beginning with the Public Health Act of 1854 (17 and 18 Vic., c. 95), if not with the Factory Acts of 1802 (42 Geo. II, c. 73), has been led to the acceptance of the doctrine that the "necessary provision for the weaker class of society is a social concern," and